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# Citroën C5 Aircross plug-in hybrid – Road Test

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The new Citroën C5 Aircross 180 PHEV Autopilot is now available from Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

The Citroën C5 Aircross has been a winner for the French marque from its 2017 launch and it's about to take them into a new era.



Within six months of going on sale, over 50,000 models had been delivered and its latest updates include a PHEV Plug-in Hybrid Electric version.

That brings a big saving if you only do a 15-miles commute each way and have access to a 7kW quick charger so you don't have to use the petrol engine. At that output the car is fully charged in about two hours.

However, if you do run out of charge the 1.6 litre petrol engine smoothly takes over and can regenerate some electricity while delivering nearly 40 mpg as well. So you get the best of both worlds, green motoring and good performance.



What's more the sophisticated on-board powertrain computer can utilise the available charge in the traction battery to boost overall performance if needed for a rapid overtake.

You really feel like you have a 2.5 or 3.0 litre conventional engine under your right foot, but of course without the fuel bills.

We have been a fan of the C5 Aircross since its launch and the PHEV model really adds to that pleasure with its mechanical refinement allied to truly exceptional comfort from the intelligent front coil and rear multi-link suspension aided by wide, deep and well supporting seats.

You can select three drive modes, essentially electric, mixed or sporting and the system



does the rest. The petrol engine is very smooth and usually noticeably quiet but press on and the busy note intrudes to join a constant background rumble from the tyres. Wind and other mechanical noises are low. A very well designed and tuned eight-speed automatic transmission delivers instant responses plus silken changes, and you are never left wanting for performance.

I liked the powerful smooth brakes underfoot, the strong electric parking brake and easy if insulated steering feedback. The turning circle was good and it did not kick-back over bad roads. Secondary controls on wheel spokes and column took care of most essential features with additional switches on the lower fascia and central console but some were also built into the big infotainment screen high on the dash, which might distract some users.

A smaller screen in front of the driver showed the usual road speed, engine revs., fuel and temperature levels and they were very clear. Heating and ventilation was straightforward, easy to use and worked well to heat or cool the interior, with a huge sunroof and electric windows to give maximum choice.

There are lots of oddments spaces in this family five-seater with rear pockets and bins, while those in front have large recesses and compartments to store essential items as well. The knee-high boot floor is flat, wide and quite deep front to back, with a lower compartment for the power-cable and some tools and its overall capacity is quickly expanded as the three rear seats can be dropped in stages.

Access is good for everyone and inside the head, leg and elbow room is very good with driver and passenger enjoying a lot of manual adjustment, but the steering column movement is limited.

The quality of seating is very good and the C5 Aircross comfort is truly exceptional at this price. All bumps are cushioned by the system and nothing seemed to get into disturb the occupants although you could hear how hard it was working.

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There was some trade off because it would lean or roll around tighter bends at speed but how many drive in that manner for any distance? Road holding was generally good with a safe tendency to run wide or understeer sharp corners and then correct and firm up the line when the throttle or steering was eased back.

The C5 Aircross has an airy feel to the cabin thanks to the low waistline with big windows and visibility was good, except the pillars either side of the front windscreen and their accompanying big mirrors did combine to create blindspots at junctions or roundabouts. Cameras and sensors covered reversing and parking.

## VERDICT

Our Shine example is one of seven trim levels and came very well equipped to integrate with a mobile phone and the only paid-for option was £545 for metallic paint. There are a number of no-cost options, which seems very good value in today's market, but the warranty is not exceptional.

What is exceptional is the Citroën C5 Aircross PHEV's all round competence as a family car, which delivers much more refinement than models costing 50% more and offers a taxwise and greener drive as well.

**For:** Extremely comfortable ride and seats, very smooth powertrain, roomy for five and luggage, highly equipped.

**Against:** Road and engine noises, little feel from steering, some blindspots despite many cameras & sensors, average warranty.



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Mini Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

## Citroën C5 Aircross Shine 180 PHEV Auto8

Price: £34,905 including £545 optional metallic paint.

Mechanical: 1.6 litre, 4-cylinder, 178 bhp PureTech petrol engine with 47 bhp 81kW electric motor, 8-speed automatic, front wheel drive.

Performance: 140 mph, 0 - 62 mph 8.7 seconds, Official WLTP Combined Cycle 166 mpg, (39 mpg on test), CO2 emissions 32 - 41 g/km.



Tax costs: VED First Year £0, Standard rate £140, BiK company car tax 10%.

Insurance Group: 32E

Warranty: 3-years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.50 m (14.76 ft), W 2.01 m (6.59 ft), H 1.67 m (5.48 ft),  
boot/load space 460 to 1,510 litres (16.24 to 53.33.cu.ft), 5-doors/5-seats.